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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-01	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-02	CCO-00
	CG-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	FBO-01	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	MMP-00	M-00	AC-01	NEA-00
	DCP-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	FMP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6285
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS AMMAN 005158

LONDON FOR SUTPHIN, PARIS FOR LEAF, ROME FOR QUESADA

USAID/ANE/MEA FOR FINAN AND ROJAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER, ASEC, KPAL, KISL, JO
SUBJECT: SECURITY COURT CONVICTS UBL SUSPECTS OF PLOTTING

ATTACKS DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

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1. (U) THE STATE SECURITY COURT ON SEPTEMBER 18 CONVICTED 22 SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF USAMA BIN LADEN'S "AL QAEDA" TERRORIST NETWORK OF PLANNING ATTACKS ON TOURIST SITES DURING THE MILLENNIUM. ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS, THE COURT SENTENCED EIGHT DEFENDANTS (FOUR OF WHOM REMAIN AT LARGE) TO DEATH, BUT LATER COMMUTED TWO OF THE SENTENCES TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AT HARD LABOR. THOSE SENTENCED TO HANG INCLUDE REPUTED GROUP RINGLEADER, KHADER ABU HOSHAR. THE COURT SENTENCED 14 OTHER DEFENDANTS TO PRISON TERMS RANGING BETWEEN SEVEN-AND-A-HALF AND 15 YEARS AND ACQUITTED SIX MEN FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE. ALL OF THOSE WHO STOOD TRIAL ARE JORDANIANS OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN, EXCEPT FOR ONE IRAQI NATIONAL, WHO WAS ACQUITTED, AND ONE ALGERIAN, WHO RECEIVED A SEVEN-AND-A-YEAR SENTENCE. THE VERDICTS WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE APPEALED TO THE COURT OF

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CASSATION. JORDAN HAS COMMUTED ALL PREVIOUS DEATH SENTENCES FOR CRIMES OF THIS NATURE.

2. (U) THE HEAD OF THE COURT'S THREE-MAN TRIBUNAL COL. TAYEL RAQAD SAID "THE COURT HAS NO DOUBT THAT THOSE SENTENCED TO DEATH HAD A DETERMINED WILL TO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST AMERICAN AND ISRAELI INTERESTS IN JORDAN." ABU HOSHAH'S LAWYER, SALAH BADR, TERMED THE VERDICTS POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED. HE AND OTHER DEFENSE LAWYERS HAD ARGUED THAT THEIR CLIENTS HAD NO LINKS TO BIN LADEN AND ONLY WANTED TO "FIGHT JEWS" AND UPHOLD ISLAM. ACCORDING TO LAWYER JAWAD YOUNIS, THE CONVICTIONS WERE DESIGNED TO "SERVE THE AMERICANS AND TO PROVE THAT JORDAN IS PURSUING WHAT THEY CALL TERRORISTS." MUNIR MAQDAH, WHO WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA, TOLD REPORTERS IN LEBANON THAT THE "RULING WAS MADE BY JORDAN TO SATISFY THE UNITED STATES AND THE SECURITY APPARATUS OF THE ZIONIST

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STATE."

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